

OHIO: Ohio Still Leaves Sexual Education to Each District

Pat Holmes

February 15, 2012

Columbus Dispatch (01.29.12) - Wednesday, February 15, 2012

Ohio does not plan to adopt non-binding guidelines for sex education issued recently by a national coalition of health and education groups. The report, "National Sexuality Education Standards," lists what students should know in each grade, outlining "what, based on research and extensive professional expertise, are the minimum, essential content and skills for sexuality education K-12." State law and Ohio Department of Health (ODH) guidelines say schools should teach about STDs and drug-abuse prevention in health education classes, but they do not specify learning objectives by grade.

"I'm hoping most people ... are using national standards," said Jodi Palmer, leader of K-12 wellness teachers in Upper Arlington schools. "Without a system that's here, that we can access, you don't really have any consistency of programming across the state." "It's really a local decision on what [schools] do in terms of health education," said Patrick Gallaway, a spokesperson for the state Department of Education. More specific guidelines cover math and reading because Ohio gives standardized tests on these subjects, Gallaway said.

"It's up to the individual districts to decide what they want to do for a curriculum, and they can adapt it to what their community needs," said Tessie Pollock, an ODH spokesperson.

The Dublin and Upper Arlington districts have modeled their education plans on CDC standards that delineate various aspects of health education. While organized by grade, the standards emphasize communication and decision-making skills rather than specific topics that should be learned at each level.

For more information about the "National Sexuality Education Standards," visit:

<http://lyris.danyaitss.com/t/2481681/3074008/236/25/>

[See the topic on aegis.org](http://aegis.org)